

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and  
Social Sciences

Great Plains Studies, Center for

---

Spring 2001

## Review of *The Encyclopedia of Native American Economic History* Edited by Bruce E. Johansen

John Moore  
*University of Florida*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

Moore, John, "Review of *The Encyclopedia of Native American Economic History* Edited by Bruce E. Johansen" (2001). *Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*. 559.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch/559>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

**The Encyclopedia of Native American Economic History.** Edited by Bruce E. Johansen. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999. xviii+301 pp. References, bibliography, index. \$85.00 cloth (ISBN 0-313-30623-0).

The publication of this reference work is well-timed to encourage a burgeoning new field of scholarship that cuts across the traditional disciplines of history, anthropology, economics, and political science. Since John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx, economic history and political economy have occupied at least small sectors of these disciplines, but the field has been expanding in recent years thanks to the efforts of scholars who feel constrained by traditional disciplinary boundaries, scholars whose work is chronicled here.

The encyclopedia contains over one hundred and eighty articles of medium length, usually two to three pages, on a wide range of topics. The reason I'm unsure of the exact number is that the volume lacks a table of contents or list of articles, requiring one to count the bold-face entries in the index to enumerate them. Nor do the entries offer initials or code to identify the author of each article. The work does provide a rather friendly and conversational five-page preface, which has convinced me that its editor and contributors are social and congenial people, colleagues you'd like to have a drink with. It is also clear that the editor wants to place his work at the service of Native American people.

The articles themselves are well-written, thoughtful, and serious, some more than others. Examining the entries I knew something about, I could fault them in neither logic, importance, nor presentation, although a certain arbitrary lack of historical depth is evident throughout. This problem is a common one for the makers of encyclopedias: when you go back in time on subjects like "encomienda" or "fur trade," where do you stop? In this case the editor, as indicated in his preface, has put the most emphasis on recent topics and recent events in reservation economies.

My personal favorites for topical entries are the articles on the Akwesasne Mohawks, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, economic and social conditions, gambling, Hodenosaunee (Iroquois) economy, northwest coast economy, and slavery. There are entries for all the major Native tribes and nations of the US and Canada, describing briefly the histories of their economies; and there are entries for some historical personages. Since editor Bruce Johansen is also an editor of *The Encyclopedia of Native American Biography*, one might hope he will select certain of those entries describing Indian leaders who have been economic innovators on their reservations to be rewritten for the next edition of the present work. It seems odd to include William Johnson but not Phillip Martin, for example.

Of course readers will notice many items missing from the bibliographies, which is normal for first-time encyclopedias. No doubt readers will supply the editor with additional items and citations, thereby helping to improve an already interesting and successful reference. I would encourage serious scholars of Native America to purchase the book, either for themselves or for their school library. It provides excellent access to additional publications on a variety of topics. **John H. Moore**, *Department of Anthropology, University of Florida*.